

# The Jessica Wilkes Award – Year 2 (2009-2010)

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## January 2009

### An annual award to celebrate the life of artist, Jessica Wilkes (1948-2005)

The annual Jessica Wilkes Award provides an artist with a free studio and grant to enable them to devote more of their time to their studio practice.

This major professional development opportunity is the result of a legacy from the estate of the artist Jessica Wilkes who died in November 2005 at the age of 56. Jessica had been the tenant of an Acme short-life house in Southwark for a number of years. In the 80s she, like many other Acme tenants, had the opportunity to buy her house at a discounted price and as a result was able, with this secure base, to focus on her work as a painter.

Jessica was a fine art student at Newcastle University and moved to London in 1975 where she completed an MA in Painting at Chelsea School of Art. She exhibited her paintings extensively throughout her professional



Jessica Wilkes

life and established strong connections with the Bermondsey Artists' Group and with Byam Shaw School of Art, where she taught. She also had a long term involvement with the Youth Services and

was instrumental in supporting other studio groups.

Her wish was that through her bequest to Acme other artists would be given the opportunity to have a practical

and financial breathing space. As drawing was at the centre of Jessica's practice, she hoped that artists who shared this approach would benefit. Drawing can be defined in many ways and can be interpreted to incorporate a wide number of disciplines within contemporary practice

We believe that this award is a fitting memorial and a celebration of her life, her work and her generosity. Working closely with her family and friends we have established the award in a way which we hope will maximise its impact and financial value. Acme's work is dedicated to supporting artists who cannot afford to rent studio and living space on the open market and this award will help extend the value of what we do.

### The award and eligibility

The award will be made to an artist who is currently (as at March 1 2009) an Acme studio tenant. The financial value of the award is £10,000. Acme will waive the rent on

the selected artist's studio for a year from April 2009 and the balance from the £10,000 will be made as a grant payable in advance in four equal instalments. A rent for an average-sized Acme studio of 400 square feet is around £3,400 a year.

Artists who apply need to demonstrate that they are in need of financial assistance and that this award will make a significant difference to the development of their practice.

Acme will work with the recipients to promote their work and the results of their year's award.

### Selection criteria and process

Artists will need to show:

- How this award will benefit their practice and what particular 'project' this award will help them realise
- Their financial need

- The relationship of drawing to their work

Artists are asked to read the application notes, complete and return the application form along with a CV and submit documentation of work.

A panel consisting of Melissa Appleton (Jessica's niece), Jonathan Harvey, Co-Director Acme Studios, Joanna Hewison (Jessica's sister) and Clyde Hopkins (artist and friend) will short-list from the applications and then make studio visits to each of the short-listed artists to make the final selection.

This is the second year of the Jessica Wilkes Award. The 2008 recipient was painter Howard Dyke. Through the award Howard has been able to pursue his painting in a more focussed way and it has allowed him an intense and productive period of activity, without the pressure of having to balance his practice with more regular employment.

The Jessica Wilkes Award is currently funded for three years. If you would like to help to support artists through this award, please send your donation made payable to 'Acme Studios' c/o Jessica Wilkes Award, Acme Studios, 44 Copperfield Road, London, E3 4RR.

### Gift Aid donation

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation go further.

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